

## Echoes of Religious Thought.

By W. K. AZBILL.

God sons our fellowmen  
Save them from every sin—  
Make them thine own;  
From heaven, thy dwelling place  
Look on our helpless race,  
Save them through Jesus' grace.  
Thou Holy One.

Teach us to know thy word,  
O, thou our only Lord—  
Thy will be done—  
Bid all our strifes to cease,  
Let Christain love increase,  
Give us thine own sweet peace,  
Oh, Make us One.

"Whatsoever you would not that men should do to you, do you not to them."—*Confucius*.

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."—*Jesus*.

When the priest and the Levite, on the way to Jericho, passed by their unfortunate countryman without showing any indignity or adding any thing to his discomfort—as they would not have liked another to do to them—they were within the requirement of the golden rule of Confucius; but when the Good Samaritan took him up and carried him on his own beast to an inn, and provided for the sufferer's cure, keep and comfort, he was within the requirement of the Golden Rule of Jesus. The disciple of Confucius is taught to refrain from evil; the disciple of Christ is urged to do good. The one way may be good, though there are times when non-interference is a crime; but the other is far better, and not only justifies but requires intervention for the welfare of the abused.

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The contentions of the "higher critics," and all the other critics, continue without abatement, especially in the religious journals; and one of the striking things about these contentions is the persistence with which the critics misunderstand one another. From ages long gone the devoutest of Christian men have taken the lead in the higher Biblical criticism, which relates to the composition of documents, rather than to the thought which they contain yet, there is a disposition in a certain quarter to regard all higher criticism and all higher critics as skeptics and as destroyers of the Bible. On the other hand, during recent years, a studious but reckless tribe of literary critics has arisen whose succeeding generations are kept busy pointing out the mistakes of their ancestors, and who seem disposed to take to themselves the honor of being the only higher critics. Every week brings items and comments on "the latest trend," or "the most recent point of view," or "the results of the final findings" of the most enlightened critics, which greatly modify or else completely upset the profoundest theories of the previous week. In the meanwhile, the Bible and faith

in the Bible remain undisturbed, not because the believers are either ignorant or indifferent, but because it has come to be understood that the critics have yet a good deal to do before they can pronounce a final judgment.

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The May number of the *Homiletic Review* has an able paper from the pen of Prof. Charles M. Mead, D.D., New Haven, Conn., on *Tendencies of Recent Theistic Thought*, in which (1) The scientific foundation of theistic belief itself, (2) The Divine personality, and (3) The moral character as an important part of the Divine personality, are the chief points discussed. On the first point evolution is considered to have an important bearing. There are two types of evolutionists; the theistic and the atheistic. The theistic define evolution as the divine method of working; the atheistic define it as a process of development which dispenses with the divine altogether. This view the learned professor disposes of with a *reductio ad absurdum*, yet he admits that evolution has modified the old theology, though it has not extirpated it. The following two sentences embody the main thought of this section of his paper: "It (evolution) has compelled us to lay less stress on individual adaptations of means to ends; but it has all the more compelled us to inquire for the purposes of the *whole process*, and to believe there is, such a purpose, even if it is not yet fully discovered. \* \* \* Evolution has tended to make natural theology less an accumulation of distinct arguments, \* \* \*; and has forced theologians to lay stress on the deeper principle which underlies all the arguments—the natural and irrepressible feeling that there must be a reason for all things, and that the reason must be found in a reasonable person."

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In America as well as in England a good deal is being written, chiefly in the religious press, in remonstrance against the publication of Sunday papers. Those who make a plea for a day of rest have the better part of the contention; but they should object also to the Monday morning paper which must be edited and printed in the end of "the Lord's day." The *Evangelical Messenger*, Cleveland, remarks that "what is a good argument for the Sunday newspaper, is good for other forms of Sabbath desecration," seeming to forget that it is not the reading of a paper on Sunday or any other day that defiles a man or desecrates a day, but the contents of the paper read. The *Commonwealth*, Philadelphia, with reference to the difficulty of preserving the reverent and spiritual life, and the withstanding of the

pressure of the world upon the church, adds wisely that "new difficulties and dangers do not imply that Christianity will suffer defeat; they rather call for a more pronounced and aggressive attitude towards everything that opposes and hinders the kingdom of God." It might be added that it is needful for the church to pass through every possible phase of trial and danger for the development of every possible virtue and grace.

### The International Lesson Paraphrased.

Colossians 3:1-15.

1. If you then were raised out of the water of your baptism (see v. 12) as Christ arose from the grave, and are identified with Christ in the new life, which is endless, aim to make the seat of Christ at the right hand of the Throne of the Universe your view point, and

2. Let your emotions arise from this superior view of human life, and not from any narrow or selfish view;

3. For you are dead to all motives save those which control the life of Christ and your life is merged with Christ's in the Deity himself.

4. When Christ shall appear, whose life is henceforth identical with ours in nature and purpose, then God also shall appear with him in the glory of the triumph and supremacy of the right and the good.

5. Therefore, you should kill every low and degrading desire of the flesh, as fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is a form of idolatry (as it indicates a trust in worldly possessions instead of faith in God who promises to provide);

6. On which account, according to the creative arrangements of the natural as well as the spiritual world, hardships fall upon the disobedient;

7. In which course of disobedience you were walking before you renounced the worldly and selfish life and adopted the Christ's idea of life.

8. But now you have put off all those things, such as anger, (which is dangerous), wrath, (which is cruel), malice, (which is mean), railing, (which is presumptuous), and shameful speaking, (which is degrading), unworthy of a Christian's mouth;

9. Do not lie nor deceive one another, since you have renounced every motive which would lead to deception (which is of the Devil); for

10. You have assumed the character of the NEW MAN who, through the higher and better knowledge of life's essence and aim, is restored to the image of God the Creator,

11. Where one's character is not ascertained through his nationality, as a Jew or a Greek or a Scythian, or by one's environment or condition, as bond or free, but where Christ's ideas and spirit pervade all and control all.

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